



Easter Seals Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain, Inc. Regional

EXHIBIT 4  
DATE 2/7/2011  
HB  
Service Center  
4400 Central Avenue  
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February 7, 2011

Representative Don Roberts, Chairman  
Health and Human Services Joint Appropriations Sub-Committee  
State Capitol - Room 102  
Helena MT 59812

Dear Chairman Roberts:

I am Maria Winslow, a Workforce Development Specialist with Easter Seals-Goodwill in Great Falls, MT. I work with Vocational Rehabilitation and Extended Employment clients in Great Falls.

This testimony is comprised of comments written by clients in the Great Falls Extended Employment program. They could not be here today because they are working. However, they appreciate the opportunity to let you know what having a job in the Extended Employment program means to them.

Judy -

"Extended Employment is a great big challenge for me. I enjoy it. I can't find nothing else because I am not a young person anymore. It's hard. I've had surgeries and other medical business and so this work is best for me. It's important to have a job like this because I'm not as fast as I used to be. I feel great, really wanted. I know people depend on me to get to work. It makes me get up every day."

Bill -

"Extended Employment means that I can keep working as long as I can and do better each day. Before my job I was bored a lot. My job is the best thing that's ever happened to me. I like being away from home, being around people and keeping busy."

Erica-

"If I didn't have Extended Employment my Mom would be bugging me to get a job. With my Extended Employment job, I get to meet new people. We have fun together to try to stay on track. It's important for people who don't have as much money as other people can come to work. My job helps people in third world countries. (Goodwill industries sends unused donations to third world charities)."

Jeremy-

"Before Extended Employment I could not get a job. This job means the world to me. This place is the greatest place in the world. I love what I do. Everyone is super nice. A job is so good keeping you going instead of sitting around the house getting bored."

Thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony with you today. Sincerely,

Maria Winslow

Workforce Development Specialist  
Easter Seals Goodwill  
205 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Great Falls MT 59405  
(406) 771-0026

Montana State Legislators My name is Kenneth Carlson

I'm an Extended Employee with Easter Seals / Goodwill store in Great Falls. I am one of 350 people with a disability that work in a sheltered work place. We work for minimum wage with minimum hours, doing inventory processing for the Goodwill store. Some of the employees live in group homes and others with their parents or loved ones. The money we earn pays our taxes and buys our necessities. The product that is sold at the Easter Seals Goodwill store goes to the programs sponsored by Easter Seals and the Extended Employee program is one of those shared with the State funds. We hope that the Montana State Legislators will continue to support this program. We enjoy being able to work and to pay our way. We are unable to work a regular job because we are disabled do to an accident or medical problems. One of my coworkers is in a wheelchair and he is a single father trying to raise a daughter on his wages.

There is a waiting list of people that want and need the services provided by this program. With the soldiers coming back from Iran and Afghanistan that will also have brain injury and need help to get back in to the work force. Most of us with disability from accidents have had our files closed do to the restrictions put on by the Doctors for our safety and the safety of others.

Thank you for your time,

Kenneth N. Carlson

*to Charlie  
today  
2-2-11*



*changed lives*

*"Now Bill has a great job he loves. Most of all he's happy because he has a reason to get up every morning."*

Bill Mahoney is 29 years old, lives in his own apartment and rides the bus to his job at our Goodwill store processing plant in Great Falls. Three years ago he was still living at home with his parents and was dependent on them for a place to live, as well as transportation. Due to mental health issues that Bill's experienced much of his life, he's always needed lots of emotional support from his family.

Bill had held some part-time jobs while in high school and really desired to settle into a full-time job after he graduated. His goal remained an illusive one for several years as he tried a work experience at one local employer, but was not hired and then dealt with some setbacks emotionally when his grandfather passed away not long after that.

In 2005 Bill was referred to our WorkForce Development Center and placed on the waiting list for the state's Extended Employment program. While waiting for a position to open up, staff worked with Bill, encouraging him to gain skills he would need when he did begin working. Bill would needed transportation to get to and from a job so we helped him gain the confidence to learn to ride the city bus. We also encouraged him to look into independent living opportunities, which Bill's parents supported.

In 2006 Bill's dream of a steady job was realized when he was hired at our Goodwill plant to process clothing and household goods. In the time he's worked at Goodwill Bill has developed self confidence and independence, along with job skills. In addition, Bill now has an outlet for his terrific sense of humor and enjoys the people he works with. According to his dad, the changes have been amazing. "Every day he gains more independence and self confidence. He's productive and he has a job. Most important of all—he's happy because he has a reason to get up every morning."

CREATING SOLUTIONS THAT CHANGE LIVES

A program of Easter Seals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain, Inc.

Our *mission*



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We create solutions that change lives for people with disabilities, for the disadvantaged and for their families.